



Chairwoman Marina Dimitrijevic

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Chat with the Chair

February 2015

Dear Friends,

There is always so much going on in our Milwaukee County, especially in the Bay View and Silver City neighborhoods.

By now I'm sure you have heard a lot about pension buy-ins and buy-backs. There has been a great deal of information, as well as misinformation, communicated on this complex issue. This week, the County Board took an important vote concerning the buy-in/buy-back benefit. I would like to take the opportunity to explain this action here in my e-newsletter, as there is a very human element to this issue.

Our community is always active and engaged. We have upcoming opportunities for neighbors to enjoy great Milwaukee County resources at little to no cost, exciting neighborhood projects and great events. I am particularly excited to announce dollar days at Pulaski Pool and an update on the South Shore Park design project (see link below). I will be at Pulaski pool on Sunday, March 22 from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. during the 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. dollar swim.

I hope to see you out in the neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Marina Dimitrijevic, Chairwoman
Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
4th District

Milwaukee County News Updates

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Pulaski Pool Dollar Days
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Milwaukee County News Updates

Pension Fix Explained

Nothing makes headlines in our daily paper like county pension talk. **The pension problems of 2000 took place prior to my election in 2004, but we still have a mess to clean up. I ask you to read beyond the sensational stories** which only tell of a handful of retirees with generous pensions. These stories fail to explain the reality of more than 200 retirees with modest pensions who did nothing wrong - except maybe follow the directions and advice provided by their employer.

People were allowed to buy pension credit under an ordinance originating back to the 1950s. The county pension office told them how much to pay and when. They paid the money as directed and their pensions were adjusted for the credit they purchased. The problem is that the pension office made a series of administrative errors and the effect is that some of these purchases did not comply with the rules that the pension office is charged with following.

Now, decades later, County Executive Chris Abele is leading a charge to nullify those retirement contracts. The Milwaukee County Board followed the recommendation of the Milwaukee County Pension Board brought forward by Corporation Council in fixing the problem with a series of retroactive ordinance changes. **The Board also definitively ended the program going forward.** On Tuesday, the Board, on an 11-4 vote, overrode a veto by the Executive that would have blocked all of the ordinance changes.

Here are some facts about this group of pensioners, which may include widowers, disabled and fixed-income seniors living with assistance.

- For more than 40 percent of these retirees, the only error in the purchase of their pension credit is that they used money from their "457" deferred compensation plan to make the purchase.

It seems simple enough; they took money they had set aside for retirement and transferred it into another retirement plan with their employer.

- However, the use of 457 money was not permissible under the pension plan rules. Other errors involved limitations on the amount of credit purchased as a percentage of salary or the untimely processing of the transactions.

- The pension office processed the transactions anyway and credited the accounts. Now decades later, after most of these people have retired, the County Executive believes hundreds of these retirement contracts should be voided.

- The result of breaking these contracts is that about a dozen people would lose their pension altogether (because some of the credit they purchased counted toward their vesting period), most would have their pension cut by more than 10 percent and one in four would lose more than 20 percent of their pension payment.

Imagine if this was you.

So why does the County Executive keep saying this will save money?

- Generally, if you cut benefits you should expect to save money, but there are also significant legal risks in this case because benefits cannot be cut after the fact and the statute of limitations is only six years.

- We currently are involved in three different legal actions including a proposed class-action lawsuit as a result.

- Because these benefits were purchased and accounted for as legitimate, **there is no additional actuarial cost** of fixing the problem with retroactive ordinance changes.

I am just as bothered by these administrative mistakes as you are. As you can see from reading the facts, something the mainstream media prefers to sensationalize, this was a very complicated decision. Our county attorneys, who look out for Milwaukee County and taxpayers' interest, have advised that if these cases go before a jury they would be difficult to win. If we don't win in court, where are the savings? Under these circumstances we would be exposing taxpayers to paying for costly legal battles.

As this is a confusing issue with great amounts of misinformation, I urge you to contact me directly to discuss this vote if you have any questions. Thank you to my colleague Supervisor Theo Lipscomb, Sr. who also contributed to this information.

Milwaukee County News Updates



Pulaski Pool Dollar Days

Pulaski Pool - 2701 S. 16th St.

**Thursday, March 5, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Wednesday, March 11, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Sunday, March 22, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.**

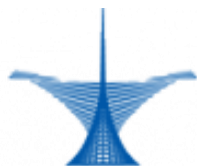
Join Marina Sunday, March 22 from 1p.m. to 2 p.m. during the 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. dollar swim.

Did you know that we have a public indoor pool right in our neighborhood? Bring your friends and family for a dollar days swim. I'll be there to welcome you and listen to your concerns about our neighborhood. Come check out this great resource in our neighborhood!



February Gift to the Community

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation is celebrating 100 years of service in 2015 by providing the public with unique experiences that showcase the people, places and opportunities that make our community special. A new Gift to the Community will be announced each month, emphasizing access and demonstrating appreciation for all the resources greater Milwaukee has to offer.



MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

Milwaukee Art Museum FREE Weekend

**Saturday, February 21 and Sunday, February 22
Milwaukee Art Museum (700 N. Art Museum Dr.)**

Continuing its celebration of a century, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation invites the public to a **FREE** weekend of unique experiences at the Milwaukee Art Museum, featuring unlimited access to the special exhibition *Inspiring Beauty: 50 Years of Ebony Fashion Fair*.



Cesar Chavez Statue Project

A public art project depicting Cesar Chavez is in the works for our neighbors in Clarke Square. Organizers are seeking donations of time, talent and/or money to support this effort. If you'd like to get involved, please contact Ivan Gamboa ([Cesar E. Chavez Business Improvement District](mailto:i.gamboa@tcnb.com)) at i.gamboa@tcnb.com or 414.476.4500, or Ian Bautista (Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative) at ian@clarkesquare.org or 414-647-0548 x 107



South Shore Park Design Project

Marina fought to ensure funding to address maintenance needs in our Parks. Now, plans continue to develop for the South Shore Park Design Project. The Milwaukee County Parks Department recently provided an update to some of our neighbors on the project's details. It places special emphasis on the design of the parking lot and beach area as a means to enhance beach and water quality. In addition, plans are in the works for an expanded concessions area that will utilize a currently underutilized storage structure in the park.

[Read more about the South Shore Park Design Project!](#)



Marina in Our Community

Marina at the Bay View Winter Blast



Marina, along with her step-daughter Lucia, enjoyed their Sunday at the Bay View Winter Blast.



Marina mingles at the Bay View Winter Blast

Marina on Board With the Streetcar



Marina (left) celebrates the passage of the Milwaukee Streetcar project along with Alderman Nik Kovac (center) and Supervisor Jason Haas (right).



Marina shakes hands with Mayor Tom Barrett shortly after the Common Council approved the streetcar project.

Marina in Our Community

Milwaukee County: Get on board with streetcar, Couture development

By Marina Dimitrijevic, as appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on Dec. 14, 2014

As a lifelong Milwaukeean, I believe that what distinguishes our community is an immense sense of pride built on the nostalgia of how our city used to be. Residents put a high value on our public spaces. We love to tell a story of our first family picnic in a county park or how many times we have seen the dinosaur exhibit at the public museum. While we have a rich history, our best days aren't behind us, they await us.

As a community, we are at a critical crossroads. We can let our challenges overcome us or choose to create new opportunities and grow. It is time for our urban revival. A time to come together and make sure we are one strong city, not two.

Developing the county's underutilized, downtown transit center site is a critical step forward. The 44-story, skyscraping Couture development will add population density by housing more than 600 new downtown residents while increasing public space. This catalytic \$122 million investment provides thousands of family-supporting jobs and will take the current tax revenue created from zero to \$68 million.

The Couture developer has agreed to hire 40% of workers from within Milwaukee County and contract with Disadvantaged Business Enterprises for 25% of this development. The city of Milwaukee has committed \$400,000 as part of the proposed East Michigan tax incremental district toward much-needed workforce development. Recently, an additional \$100,000 has been promised at the county level from the developer matched at \$100,000 by the Milwaukee Area Workforce Development Board, making the total investment in preparing our workforce more than a half-million dollars. These city-county resources will connect job seekers with employers, build workers' skills and strengthen our local talent pipeline.

Construction and operation of the Milwaukee streetcar also will provide training and economic growth. It will complement our bus system by feeding into the larger system and attracting riders. This will result in an overall expansion of transit services in Milwaukee County. A 2008 report on the Portland, Ore., streetcar explains that more than \$3 billion in new development has taken place within two blocks of fixed streetcar routes.

Similar streetcar projects are moving forward in Seattle, Wash.; Tacoma, Wash. and Tucson, Ariz. Let's get in on the action. New downtown residents will spend at small businesses, which will create more local jobs that must pay family-supporting wages. Increased tourism will pay off countywide.

Take a walk with me down Milwaukee's future memory lane. After enjoying local flavors at the Milwaukee Public Market, we take a ride on the modern streetcar and head quickly to the Milwaukee Art Museum. We hop off at the lakefront and visit the museum to see the newest exhibit for free. The new sales tax our community supported has helped fund our cultural assets, so we can all access this world-renowned art without paying for admission. We walk across the bridge to rent a bike at the transportation hub housed in the Couture and ride to do some shopping at the revitalized Shops of Grand Avenue.

Our past leaders were forward-thinking visionaries who took big risks in building our emerald necklace, our county parks system and great public infrastructure such as the central branch of the library. The sure way to go nowhere is to do nothing. But I'm betting on Milwaukee. Let's take a chance together — and let's rise together.



Save the Date

Around the Corner Silver City Premiere

Monday, March 23rd

6:00 p.m. Reception | 7:00 p.m. Screening

Mitchell Park Domes

524 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee, WI



Free Registration Required

Be the first to see the Silver City episode of the Emmy Award winning "Around the Corner with John McGivern." In the episode, McGivern tours all of the many wonderful attractions that make Silver City a great Milwaukee neighborhood!



Mad Hatter Tea

Saturday, March 7 and Sunday, March 8

3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Charles Allis Art Museum (1801 N Prospect Ave)

Reservations are required and mad hats are encouraged. Admission is \$30/\$25 for museum members and \$10 for children 12 and under. Make your reservations a rsvp@cavtmuseums.org or with Ann at 414-278-8295 x5

This is a great event for parents, children, relatives, friends and mad hatters! Meet Alice In Wonderland characters while sampling a variety of Rishi teas, catered sandwiches and sweet treats. Live music performed by Jeffrey Krumbein, complimentary hand massage given by the Milwaukee School of Massage, a Docent-guided museum tour, prizes and more.

Live Music at The Domes

January 8 - March 19, 2015

Thursday Nights, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

524 S. Layton Blvd.

Rediscover the Domes and enjoy live music Thursday nights! Music Under Glass includes light shows at the breaks and following the concert. For more information call: (414) 257-5611



Milwaukee County Winter Farmers' Market

November 1, 2014 through April 11, 2015

Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

FREE parking and INDOOR shopping

524 S. Layton Blvd.

Agricultural vendors offer high quality fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs, poultry and dairy products. Local food vendors also bring a wide variety of freshly baked goods, jams, cider, honey, maple syrup, sauces and soups, as well as delicious ethnic cuisine.

Layton Boulevard West 2015 Executive Breakfast

Thursday, March 19th, 2015

7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Alverno College Sister Joel Read Center

3400 S. 43rd St., Milwaukee, WI 53234

Join the Layton Boulevard West Neighbors in celebrating 20 years of neighborhood revitalization in Layton Boulevard West. Visit www.lbwn.org/executivebreakfast for more information on sponsorship opportunities, ticket prices and more!

